



Community Health Improvement Process

**2014-2015 Community Health Needs Assessment
Community Conversation with Seniors
Holiday Park Senior Center
July 13, 2015**

Introduction

Healthy Montgomery hosted a community conversation on health and well-being at the Holiday Park Senior Center on Monday, July 13, 2015. The conversation took place from 1:00 to 3:00 pm in Silver Spring, MD. There were 20 participants. The conversation was facilitated by Cathie Sheffield-Thompson.

The community conversation included a discussion of what is meant by health and well-being at the individual and community levels, elements of a healthy community, community assets and challenges in Montgomery County, and practical steps to improve the health and well-being of the community. Participants engaged in both large and small group discussion, and were also offered the opportunity to contribute comments and feedback regarding the meeting in writing.

Defining Health and Well-Being

To begin the conversation, the participants shared what they do to be in a state of health and well-being. Seniors at Holiday Park stated that socializing, exercising, eating healthy, going outdoors, having friendly neighbors, and staying connected with family are some of the ways they define health and well-being. Senior centers, good transportation, access to good doctors, dental care, not living alone, and opportunities to keep learning also were identified.

Assets that Support Health and Well-Being

Community participants identified resources in the community that enabled them to thrive in their healthiest state of wellness.

Holiday Park and other community centers such as Longwood in Rockville that focuses on seniors were very popular among this group. Senior centers were noteworthy for:

- Providing a Senior Outdoor Adventure in Recreation (SOAR) program
- Exercise, fitness, computer, and technology classes
- More affordable recreation classes at Rockville Senior Center
- Places to relax, read
- Being a gathering place for seniors
- A place to stay active
- Opportunities to join groups based on interests
- Inexpensive lunch
- A music program
- Day trips
- Health fairs



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- On-call nurse at senior centers (at least for a few hours)

These recreational parks and community resources that support health and well being were also important to maintaining health and well being:

- Various trails such as the Matthew Henson trail (assessable, close)
- Great park system
- Tracks at high schools open to the community
- Aspen Hill club for fitness, pool, tennis
- Installation and checking of smoke detectors by the Fire Department
- PEPCO home energy visits to install LED lights
- LIFELINE emergency alert service
- Jewish Community Center (JCC) facilities and shuttles
- Ride On buses/Metro access
- Several hospitals

Barriers to Health and Well-Being

Participants discussed challenges in their community that make healthy living more difficult.

An aging population presents its own challenges to living healthy that others may take for granted.

- Getting old
- Support for adult children of seniors (policies, resources, etc.)
- Need more information for how to prepare for elderly parents and their changing needs

Transportation, health care, dealing with diverse populations raised several challenges.

Transportation challenges include:

- Often delayed and not affordable public transportation
- Traffic worsening due to construction
- Noise pollution from construction
- Hazards to other drivers and pedestrians posed by texting/phone use while driving
- Difficulty retaining driver's license as a senior
- More traffic and parking lot congestion makes it hard to find parking space
- Complicated intersections (E-W highway @16th st)
- Difficulty walking in bad weather

Seniors shared the following health care challenges:

- When transitioning into Medicare, seniors are impacted by changing to different providers and needing referrals for specialists
- Increasing prescription drug costs, including generic drugs
- A prevalence of drugs and an increasing number of prescriptions written
- Over medication and unnecessary medical tests
- Finding the right doctor for a health condition



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- Finding a primary care doctor
- Finding an American doctor

Interaction with diverse populations raised several challenges relating to outreach, knowledge and communications.

- Outreach, knowledge, access and interest in senior service by African American, Hispanic, and minority groups in general
- Diversity/language barriers limit use of services
- Need English bilingual speakers

Practical Steps to Improve Health and Well-Being

Participants at Holiday Park Senior Center made the following recommendations to improve health and well-being. The list below is ordered by the priority voting given to each item.

1. Hold more health fairs, information sessions and increase knowledge of resources for seniors (9 priority votes)
2. Make information accessible for seniors (legal, transportation, health fairs (8 priority votes)
3. Increase hospital outreach programs that are affordable, accessible and free for diabetes, and other conditions (7 priority votes)
4. Provide reasonably priced secondary insurance with comprehensive health coverage (5 priority votes)
5. Restrict or limit trucks on the Beltway – altogether or certain hours (4 priority votes)
6. Add “yield for pedestrian” signs or crosswalks for pedestrians (4 priority votes)
7. Educate seniors about safety, scam, and protecting privacy online (4 priority votes)
8. Keep senior centers open year-round (4 priority votes)
9. Provide a transportation volunteer to assist seniors in getting to their destination in the most affordable manner possible (3 priority votes)
10. Promote senior services information (in multi-lingual formats) at churches, shopping centers, grocery stores, libraries (3 priority votes)
11. Offer movies as an alternative to events (3 priority votes)
12. Assign staff at Holiday Park Center to intentionally converse and engage seniors dropped off for babysitting. Find ways to encourage participation in activities (2 priority votes)
13. Lower costs of using ICC (Intercounty Connector) and extend it (2 priority votes)
14. Better planning of construction (2 priority votes)
 - a. Work during non-peak times
 - b. Keeping more lanes open
 - c. Not having as many work sites at the same time; finish old before starting new
15. Encourage seniors to schedule appointments or trips during non-peak hours to avoid traffic (2 priority votes)
16. Try new courses e.g. Tai Chi (2 priority votes)
17. Add a swimming pool in senior center (2 priority votes)
18. Increase engagement or activities for the immigrant community (2 priority votes)



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19. Increase follow-up with patients after health fairs (1 priority votes)
20. Offer dance space (1 priority votes)
21. Try senior adventure trips sponsored by SOAR (1 priority votes)
22. More lights and signs about watching for pedestrians
23. Enforce laws against texting/phones while driving and walking across streets
24. Provide more special parking for senior (like maternity parking) as an addition to handicap spaces
25. Add stop signs at parking lot entry/exit points at Holiday Park Senior Center
26. Use AV equipment

Community Conversation Feedback

Participants were provided an opportunity to give written feedback about the meeting. In a short closeout survey, participants were asked, "Is there anything else that you want us to know, including what you like or did not like about this community conversation?" Two participants responded to this question and their comments are provided below.

Make the metro bus actually send the L8 buses up and down Connecticut Avenue and stop for riders.

The round table approach was effective.